

# March 2017 WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

## National Nutrition Month



March is National Nutrition Month! While it is recognized nationwide this month, it is important to remember to practice healthy eating habits all year. Proper nutrition is vital for a healthy body that can function efficiently and fight off infection. Unfortunately, many of us forgo eating healthy for a variety of reasons. Lack of knowledge, time and busy schedules are just a few of the common excuses our society uses as to why we don't eat healthier. Obviously it is much more convenient to throw a frozen dinner in the microwave or go through a fast food drive-through than it is to prepare a healthy, home cooked meal. But at what cost? Unfortunately, as we are turning to convenience foods more frequently, America's obesity rate is steadily rising, along with the risk of hypertension, diabetes, heart disease and even death.



## NUTRITION 101

Before you begin a healthier diet and path to better health, you must always make sure you know the basics of nutrition. It's important to remember that this path doesn't start with calorie counting and carb cutting. It begins with knowing which foods are healthy, and learning how to switch out your bad habits with healthier options.

Swapping unhealthy foods for healthier options will improve your mental clarity and energy levels, encourage weight loss, strengthen your teeth and bones, improve your sleep quality and reduce your risk of chronic conditions such as hypertension and heart disease.

As you begin making healthier choices in your nutrition, one of the first benefits you will notice is the improvement in your energy levels and mental clarity. When your body begins receiving all of the nutrients it needs (adequate proteins, carbohydrates and fats) it is able to rejuvenate itself on a cellular level. Your glucose levels will also be maintained properly, thus improving your energy levels and eliminating the typical mid-day energy crash. It is also important to maintain recommended values of vitamins and minerals (all of which you can get through recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables). For example, Calcium and Vitamin D are nutrients needed to maintain healthy bones and teeth. Calcium is what helps build and regenerate your bones and teeth, while Vitamin D is needed in order to help the body absorb the Calcium. Both of these nutrients can be provided from consuming low fat milk and dairy products, or by consuming dark leafy green vegetables including kale, spinach and broccoli.

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Those individuals who are overweight will notice a decrease in their weight over time (which is the most common reason individuals give for adopting a healthier diet). Once fatty, non-nutritious foods with empty calories have been replaced with lower calorie, nutrient dense foods (containing much needed vitamins and minerals), the individual finishes meals feeling satisfied and less likely to binge on junk food later on. Sleep quality is also known to improve when these changes are made. Consuming higher quality foods require less filtering as the body doesn't have as many toxins to remove. The improved sleep quality contributes to higher energy levels and a regulated metabolism, returning an increase in weight loss and cell regeneration.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of adopting a healthier diet is the decreased risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. Diets that are high in saturated fats and processed foods can lead to significant weight gain, which increases the individuals' risk. By increasing the amount of healthy fats (from plant sources such as olive and grape seed oils, nuts, or avocados) and decreasing unhealthy fats (from animal sources such as meats, cheeses and high fat dairy) and processed foods, the body is better able to regulate its blood sugar levels and cholesterols. There are fewer issues with plaque and build up in the arteries and the risks of hypertension are decreased. With all of these things in healthier ranges, the risk of developing certain obesity related diseases is greatly reduced or eliminated.

## HEALTHY EATING TIPS

### MAKE YOUR PLATE COLORFUL!

Choose red, orange, and dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, along with other vegetables for your meals. Add fruit to meals as part of main or side dishes or as dessert. The more colorful you make your plate, the more likely you are to get the vitamins, minerals, and fiber your body needs to be healthy

### EAT WHOLE GRAINS

An easy way to eat more whole grains is to switch from a refined-grain food to a whole-grain food. For example, eat whole-wheat bread instead of white bread. Read the ingredients list and choose products that list whole-grain ingredients first. Look for things like: "whole wheat," "brown rice," "bulgur," "buckwheat," "oatmeal," "rolled oats," "quinoa," or "wild rice."

### SWITCH TO FAT-FREE OR LOW-FAT (1%) MILK

Both have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but fewer calories and less saturated fat.

### CHOOSE A VARIETY OF LEAN PROTEIN FOODS

Meat, poultry, seafood, dry beans or peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds are considered part of the protein foods group. Select leaner cuts of ground beef (where the label says 90% lean or higher), turkey breast, or chicken breast.

### COMPARE SODIUM IN FOODS

Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose lower sodium versions of foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals. Select canned foods labeled "low sodium," "reduced sodium," or "no salt added."

### DRINK WATER INSTEAD OF SUGARY DRINKS

Cut calories by drinking water or unsweetened beverages. Soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks are a major source of added sugar and calories in American diets. Try adding a slice of lemon, lime, or watermelon or a splash of 100% juice to your glass of water if you want some flavor.

### EAT SOME SEAFOOD

Seafood includes fish (salmon, tuna, and trout) and shellfish (crab, mussels, and oysters). Seafood has protein, minerals, and omega-3 fatty acids. Adults should try to eat at least eight ounces a week of a variety of seafood. Children can eat smaller amounts of seafood, too.

### CUT BACK ON SOLID FATS

Eat fewer foods that contain solid fats. The major sources for Americans are cakes, cookies, and other desserts (often made with butter, margarine, or shortening); pizza; processed and fatty meats (e.g., sausages, hot dogs, bacon, ribs); and ice cream.

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## ChooseMYPLATE.gov

ChooseMYPLATE.gov is the new and improved food pyramid. Over the years, the old food pyramid has proven to set somewhat unrealistic expectations when it comes to serving sizes and portions, and it wasn't always easy to understand. While the information was good, the changes have made it more realistic to follow and it is broken down so that the average individual can understand serving sizes and what is recommended each day to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The below diagrams are the guidelines for MyPlate. The first diagram gives the idea is to visualize your plate, and to make the portions below visually match what is on your plate. This eliminates the need for weighing out proteins and scooping cups of veggies, fruits and grains, making the overall process of building a healthier plate with recommended portions easier. The second diagram gives the recommendations to filling your plate by meal.

MyPlate is a reminder to find your healthy eating style and build it throughout your lifetime. Everything you eat and drink matters, and the right combination can help you be healthier now and in the future.

- Focus on variety, amount and nutrition
- Choose foods and beverages with less saturated fat, sodium and added sugars
- Start with small changes to your diet so you can BUILD healthier eating styles

Eating healthy is a journey shaped by many factors, including our stages of life, access to food, culture, traditions, and the personal decisions we make over time. All your food and beverage choices count. MyPlate offers ideas and tips to help you create healthier eating habits that meet your lifestyle and improves your health.

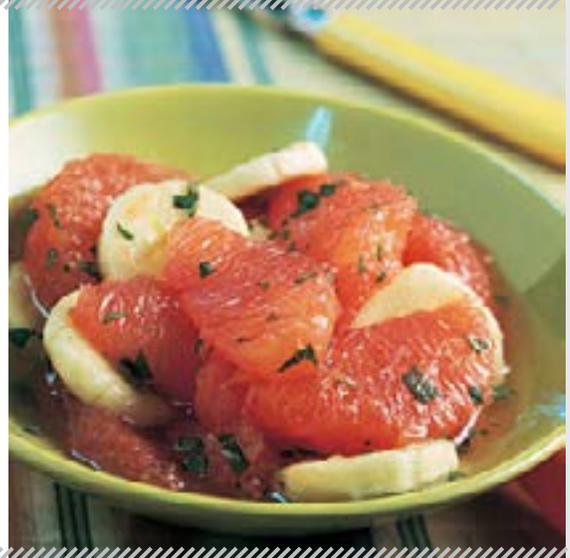


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## HONEY GRAPEFRUIT AND BANANA

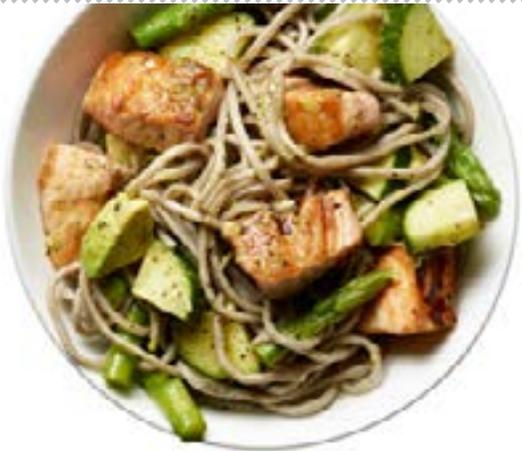
Refrigerated red grapefruit sections (about 2 cups)  
¼ cup grapefruit juice  
1 cup sliced banana (about 1)  
1 tablespoon fresh chopped mint  
1 tablespoon honey

Combine grapefruit sections, juice, and remaining ingredients in a medium bowl. Toss gently to coat. Serve immediately, or cover and chill.



## SALMON NOODLE BOWL

4 ounces soba buckwheat noodles or whole-wheat spaghetti  
5 ounces asparagus, cut in thirds  
Cooking spray  
1 (6-oz) salmon fillet, skin off, cut into 8 pieces  
1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil  
Zest and juice of 1-2 limes (3 TBSP juice)  
¼ teaspoon kosher salt  
¼ teaspoon fresh pepper  
4 ounces cucumber, skin on, cut into medium pieces  
½ small avocado, cut into bite-size pieces



1. Cook the noodles in boiling water until soft (about 6 minutes for soba, 8 for spaghetti). Transfer with tongs to a strainer. Add asparagus to same boiling water. Cook until al dente (about 2 minutes); rinse under cold water.
2. Heat a grill pan or skillet over medium-high heat. Coat lightly with cooking spray. Cook the salmon until cooked through, turning pieces (about 2-3 minutes per side). Reserve.
3. Make the vinaigrette: Whisk together sesame oil, lime zest and juice, and salt and pepper in a small bowl. Combine the noodles, asparagus, and vinaigrette in a medium serving bowl.
4. Add the cucumber and avocado; toss to coat. Just before serving, add salmon. Serve warm or at room temperature, or make up to 4 hours ahead and keep refrigerated in an airtight container.